

USDA FOREST SERVICE

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION 5

Forest Plan Revision

Collaboration Guide v3.2

The Forest Service, its stakeholders, and the Center for Collaborative Policy developed this guide in 2012 and will continue to improve it as an iterative product to support Forest Plan revision

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.



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Collaboration Guide Purpose & Overview

Over the next several years, almost all National Forests in Region 5 of the USDA Forest Service will initiate and complete Forest Plan revisions. Region 5 and the Center for Collaborative Policy, California State University, Sacramento, have worked with stakeholders throughout the region to develop this collaboration guide to promote a clear and consistent process across the region for public engagement in each Forest's assessment and revision process. **The guide is intended for Forest Service staff and the interested public to create shared expectations and understanding with regards to collaboration and public engagement during plan revision.**

The goal of collaboration during Forest Plan revision is to develop forest plans that are responsive to the interests of the forest, agencies, and the public.

Region 5 and the Center for Collaborative Policy developed this guide over the course of 2012 and plan to continue to refine it as plan revisions move forward building on innovation and best practices from throughout Region 5. The guide is an **iterative product**, meant to evolve and develop as plans move forward through the revision process.

The guide first outlines the major steps in the assessment and revision process, which will be applied in each Forest. The next section focuses on existing legal frameworks and sideboards. The following section outlines how a forest analysis of both stakeholder issues and forest capacity can lay the foundation to develop a Collaboration and Communication Plan in the public engagement section. The final sections provide a handy reference of best practices for engagement efforts, and describe how the existing Forest Service wiki website will be used to streamline and improve access to the plan revision materials for each Forest.

Public Participation at a Glance

A. How to Get Involved

Individuals and organizations have a range of options and can decide how involved they would like to be during plan revision. Some opportunities are:

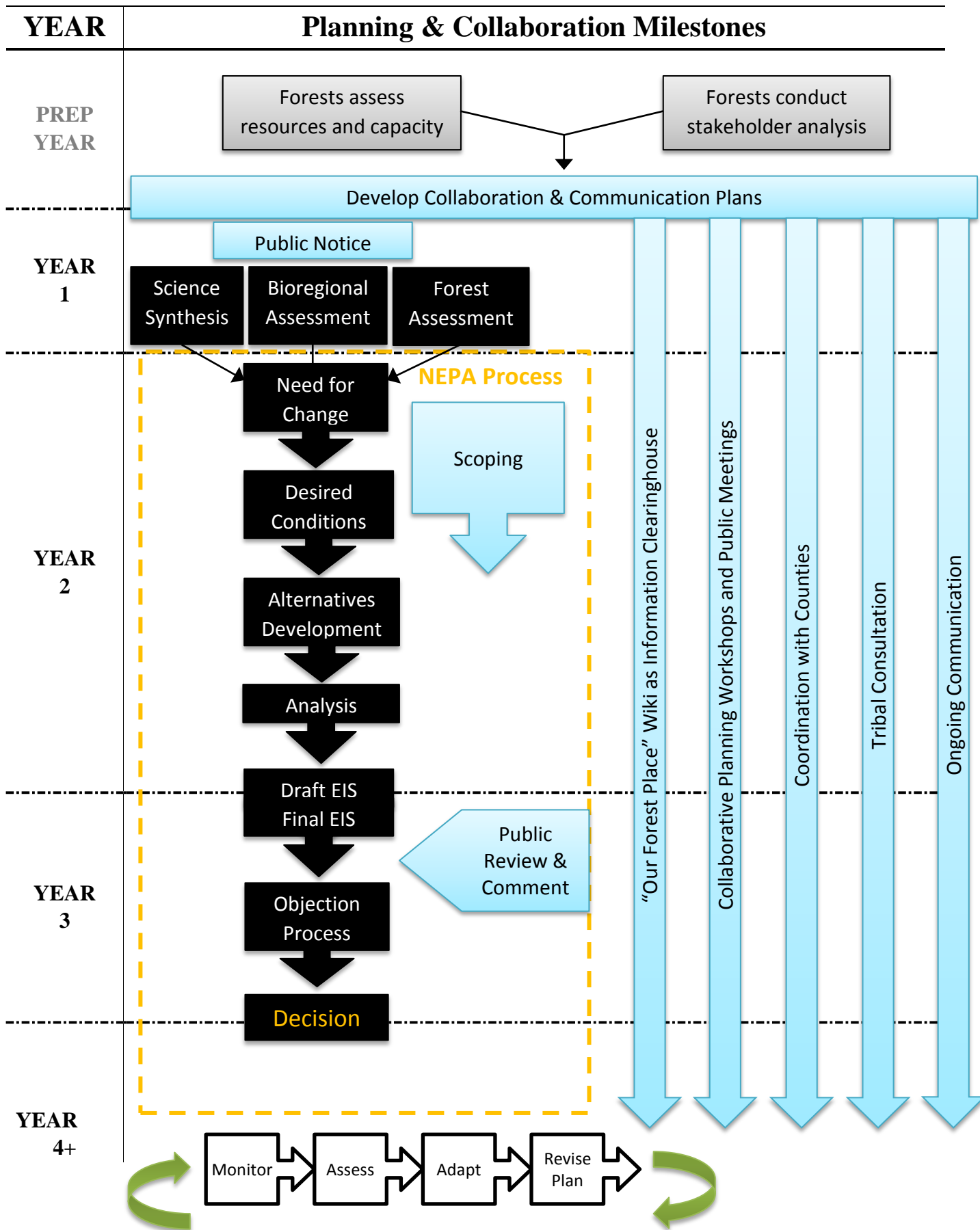
- Sign-on to the email list to receive updates and information
- Visit [Our Forest Place](#), the online Forest Service Wiki to contribute ideas and deepen understanding about the issues
- Visit the National Forest web site to track progress and learn about one or more forests
- Attend workshops and meetings on forest plan revision
- Attend the [Sierra Cascades Dialog](#)
- Participate in the environmental review by submitting a comment.
- Host a briefing update at your organization

B. Why this is Important

A Forest Plan guides a National Forest's future activities. Similar to a county's general plan, it identifies uses that may be possible in areas of the forest. The plan provides long range vision, goals and objectives. The forest then monitors to make sure it is moving toward the vision and achieving its goals and objectives. Although the plan does not detail specific projects, it sets the stage by providing guidelines to make decisions about future projects.

C. How National Forests will Use Input / Goal of Collaboration

The goal is to develop a Forest Plan that is responsive to the interests of the forest, agencies, and the public. Forest Plan revision will promote deliberations that are thoughtful and frank and include a diversity of perspectives and interests. All input will be considered and taken into account. The forest supervisor is responsible for the development and is the final decision maker on the Forest Plan.



Planning Products & Approximate Timeframes

Ultimately the revision process will generate a revised **Forest Plan** for each National Forest. Along the way, the revision process will generate a series of interim products that reflect input to date and identify subsequent planning direction.

With the exception of documents produced in the first year, these products correspond with both the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Forest Management Act, for example, desired conditions, plan alternatives, and a draft and final Environmental Impact Statement. The first two years will incorporate five products being developed by Region 5: the **Science Synthesis**, which reviews the state of knowledge for a series of key scientific topics; the **Bioregional Assessment**, which reviews the status and trends for a series of resources that stretch across the Sierra-Cascades, in conjunction with three **Forest Assessments** to specify local trends and conditions. During the first year, each Forest that initiates the revision process will locally analyze the resources, staff, data, and budget that it has available to support the revision process, and the key issues that stakeholders identify for inclusion in the revision process. Each Forest's analysis will lay the foundation for public participation during Forest Plan development.

The preceding diagram illustrates how planning milestones and products correspond with the NEPA review process, and corresponding opportunities for public engagement and collaboration.

A. Resource Categories for Bioregional and Forest Assessment

The assessment phase seeks to provide a clear understanding of what is known about the plan area in the context of the broader landscape. It will evaluate existing information at geographic scales relevant to understanding the area's ecological, economic, and social dimensions, and allow for integrating information from adjacent areas outside the Forest boundary. This information will allow for informed decision-making during the planning phase, including risks and vulnerabilities associated with long-term variability, events, and trends.

The assessment will identify the distinctive roles and contributions of the unit within the context of the broader landscape, considering the roles of the unit in providing multiple uses, including ecosystem services, from the National Forest system lands to the local area, region, and nation. The unit's distinctive roles and contributions within the broader landscape are those for which the unit is best suited, considering the Agency mission, unique capabilities, and the resources and management of other lands in the vicinity (Proposed Planning Rule 36 CFR § 219.6 9 (b)).

1. County engagement: Evaluate existing county and state planning efforts, including planning documents, land use ordinances, Fire Safe Councils, and transportation
2. Other Tribal, Federal, State and Local Government: Federal (BLM, NPS, USFWS, etc), State (water, wildlife, CalFire 2010 Assessment, Parks, etc.), and Local Improvement Districts
3. Terrestrial ecosystems, aquatic ecosystems, and watersheds
4. Air, soil, and water resources and quality

5. System drivers, including dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors, such as natural succession, wildland fire, invasive species, noxious weeds, and climate change; and the ability of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems on the plan area to adapt to change
6. Baseline assessment of carbon stocks
7. Threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, and potential Species of Conservation Concern present in the plan area
8. Social, cultural, and economic conditions
9. Benefits people obtain from the NFS planning area (ecosystem services)
10. Multiple uses and their contributions to local, regional, and national economies
11. Recreation Uses: settings, opportunity and uses, and scenic character
12. Renewable and nonrenewable energy and mineral resources
13. Infrastructure, such as recreational facilities and transportation and utility corridors
14. Areas of tribal importance
15. Cultural and historic resources and uses
16. Land status and ownership, use, and access patterns
17. Existing designated areas located in the plan area including wilderness and wild and scenic rivers, national monuments, and national scenic and historic trails and potential need and opportunity for additional designated areas.

B. Forest Plan Components

Forest Plans will be based on the bioregional and forest assessments. Plans are collaboratively developed and science-based. Plans provide a framework for integrated resource management and for guiding project decision-making. The Plan does not authorize projects or activities or commit the Forest Service to take action or regulate uses by the public. In other words, no site-specific decisions are expected to be made in a Forest Plan. Forest Plans will have the following components (Proposed Planning Rule 36 CFR § 219.7 (d))

Desired Conditions: A description of specific social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics of the plan area, or a portion of the plan area, that are described in terms specific enough to allow progress toward their achievement. Desired Conditions are what drive the plan. All management activities should be aimed at the achievement of the Desired Condition for those resources in the area where the project is located. Desired conditions can be thought of as goals that in part help define a collective vision for the National Forest in the future.

Objectives: An objective is a concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition or conditions and should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets. Objectives along with the strategies used to accomplish them can be thought of as the tools we will use to reach the desired conditions. Objectives are mileposts along the road toward desired conditions.

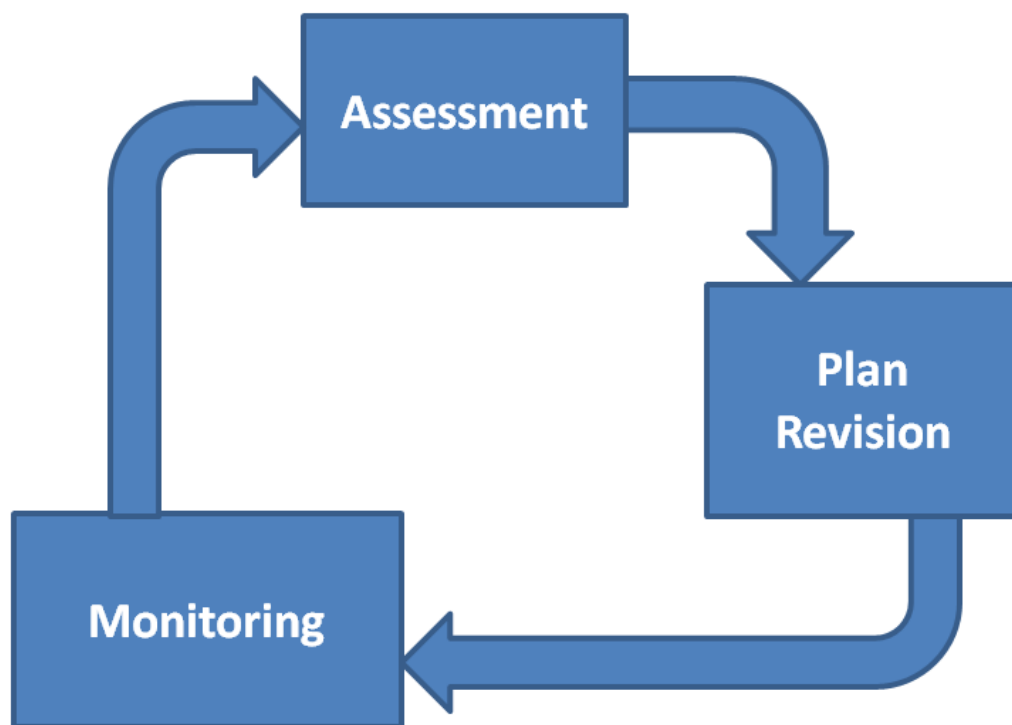
Standards: These can be thought of as the rules the forest will operate within as the forest develops projects to accomplish objectives and move closer to the realization of desired conditions. These are mandatory constraints on project and activity decision-making.

Guidelines: These describe a constraint on project and activity decision-making that allows for departure from its terms, so long as the intent of the guideline is met. In other words guidelines are mandatory unless they are replaced by something that is equal to or better than the existing guideline.

Suitability of Lands: Specific lands within a plan area identified as suitable for various multiple uses or activities based on the desired conditions applicable to those lands. The plan also identifies lands within the plan area as not suitable for uses that are not compatible with desired conditions for those lands. Every plan must identify those lands that are not suitable for timber production (required by National Forest Management Act).

C. Plan Implementation, Monitoring, and Adaptive Management

The adaptive process is based on the planning rule for plan revision. After putting together the plan, the National Forests will begin implementing the plan through specific projects, including monitoring. As the plan is implemented and projects move forward, plan and project monitoring data will be analyzed. The rule calls for periodically publishing monitoring reports and updating the monitoring plan. When new information or science emerges or monitoring suggests changed conditions, the National Forest could adjust the plan content (strategies or monitoring plan) or could amend the plan to change specific plan components. For example, if the desired conditions are not being achieved, the forest could adjust the strategies. If a desired condition needs to change for some reason (e.g. science or social), the forest would amend the plan. Each forest would determine public engagement and collaboration during plan implementation. A forest plan amendment would go through a NEPA review.



Legal Frameworks / Sideboards

A. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

The plan revision process will adhere to all applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

B. National Forest Management Act Proposed Planning Rule

The Forest Service finalized the National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule. The rule is grounded in science and public input and seeks to deliver strong protections for forests, water, and wildlife while supporting the economic vitality of rural communities. It requires opportunities for public participation and collaboration throughout all stages of the planning process; opportunities for consultation with federally recognized Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations; and coordination with other public planning efforts with federally recognized Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, other Federal agencies, and State and local governments. The rule stipulates that the supervisor of the National Forest is the decision maker for developing and approving the National Forest plan. (Rule 36 CFR § 219.2.) The Washington Office will issue directives for public notice and comment that will provide further guidance in implementing the rule. For specific rule language on public participation, see Planning Rule 36 CFR § 219.4.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule>

C. Intersection with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Revised Forest Plans must complete the NEPA review process. The NEPA process will begin with the identification of a **Need for Change** and **Desired Conditions**; these steps correspond with NEPA **Scoping**. The NEPA process will run in parallel with opportunities for public engagement and collaboration, beginning with the Assessment process (prior to NEPA), and continuing through the Need for Change, Desired Conditions, Alternatives Development, and Analysis. From the point when a new Draft Forest Plan is available, individuals will have the opportunity to participate in the formal comment period and the objection process. The Forest Supervisor issues the final Decision on the Forest Plan.

D. Tribal Consultation

As a federal agency, the Forest Service will meet all requirements to consult and collaborate with Native American Tribes and recognize that areas we currently manage are ancestral lands to many Tribes, creating the need to consult and/or collaborate with these Tribes, tribal leaders, practitioners, culture keepers and unaffiliated native descendants. Many Native American Tribes have existing agreements with specific National Forests, and the agreements will form the basis for meaningful, ongoing in-person consultative discussions. For Native American Tribes without existing agreements, the Forest Service will conduct consultation pursuant to the USDA Forest Service Tribal Consultation Policies. The Forest Service will reach out to all affected Tribes on an ongoing basis throughout the revision process, and provide options for Tribal input and engagement. In addition to direct consultation and collaboration, Tribes will be encouraged to participate in open dialogues and events

to help other forest users understand tribal concerns and perspectives. (See R5 Tribal Consultation Plan)

E. Coordination & Cooperation

The Forest Service is committed to coordinating with State and local partners during forest plan revision. Under the National Forest Management Act, the Forest Service is required to coordinate land management planning for the National Forest System with land management planning conducted by State and local governments. The Forest Service must consider the objectives of the State and local governments, and Indian Tribes as expressed in their plans and policies, assess the interrelated effects of these plans and policies, and determine how the forest plan should deal with the impacts identified. The National Environmental Policy Act regulations require the Forest Service to cooperate with State and local agencies to the fullest extent possible. The Forest Service may give “**cooperating agency**” status to a State or County whose role would be to assist the Forest Service in preparing an Environmental Impact Statement. (40 CFR 1501.6 and 1508.5). As a cooperating agency, the county can provide its special expertise to the analysis regarding issues of concern and can provide staff support to further the interdisciplinary nature of the NEPA process.

Local county governments also have an opportunity to consider signing onto a Memorandum of Agreement through the California State Association of Counties and the Regional Council of Rural Counties. The Memorandum provides single points of contact and communication guidelines for signees.

F. Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)

The USDA Forest Service Washington office established a national Federal Advisory Committee Act committee to provide input on implementation of the Proposed Planning Rule on a national scale. The Federal Advisory Committee Act was enacted in 1972 to ensure that advice by the various advisory committees formed over the years is objective and accessible to the public. The Act formalized a process for establishing, operating, overseeing, and terminating these advisory bodies.

A committee must meet three requirements in order to be subject to FACA:

- There must be a committee (i.e., more than one individual),
- The committee must formulate consensus advice, and
- The committee’s advice must be utilized by a federal agency.

National Forests will not convene new advisory committees for the plan revision process. Instead, they will host meetings and events that are open to any interested members of the public, and they will engage existing forums and collaborative groups. Furthermore, while the Forests will seek public input on proposed revisions and supporting documents, the Forests will not seek consensus. FACA is triggered when a federal agency establishes a group and does so with the purpose of obtaining advice or recommendations; it does not apply if the agency establishes a group to seek information from individual participants (41 CFS 102-3.25, definition of advisory committee).

[Link to FACA Easy Button](#)

G. Collaborative Planning Workshops and Meeting Guidelines

Consistent with FACA described above, the Forest Service can hold workshops and meetings with interested individuals and organizations to seek input on Forest Plans. To be consistent with FACA and existing policy and legal requirements, the following guidelines apply to meetings and workshops.

- **Open all meetings to the public.**
- **Allow flexible participation.** Groups cannot have set membership.
- **Make all meeting notes, informational materials, and products publicly available.** Transparency is exceptionally important.
- **Seek information from individuals, not consensus from the group.** The Forest Service cannot ask for group consensus because it suggests the group is making a decision upon which the agency will act. The Forest Service can seek information from individuals about whether consensus exists among individual participants and why; this is not the same as seeking *group consensus*.
- **Allow public review and comment on all products.** Establish opportunity for interested parties to add information and offer suggestions.
- **Individuals from collaborative planning workshops can participate fully in the NEPA process.** Individuals who contribute during collaborative planning workshops can participate in the NEPA process, including submitting formal comments or challenge decisions. Participating in collaborative planning workshops does not limit anyone's activity during the NEPA process.

Analyze Stakeholders and Forest Capacity

This purpose of this element is to analyze stakeholder issues and expectations related to the planning process and balance those interests and expectations with Forest capacity (e.g., staffing, resources, and budget). This analysis will lay the foundation for the Collaboration & Communication Plan or engagement strategy.

A. Forests Identify Stakeholders

- Air Quality
- Business, Chambers of Commerce, Community Vitality and Local Economic Development
- Ecology and Wildlife
- Environmental
- Fire Safety and Community Protection
- Forestry
- Governmental: Native American Tribes, Federally Recognized and Non-Recognized; State, County, and Local and other Federal Agencies, including Land Management and Resource Agencies
- Industry (including Biomass Processing)
- Minorities
- Permittees (of cabins, organization camps, resorts, etc. on public lands)
- Land Managers
- Landowners
- Local Community Residents
- Low-income Populations
- Recreation (including commercial interests)
- Scientists
- University Researchers and Students
- Urban Users
- Water Agencies
- Youth
- Other?

B. Conduct Stakeholder Interviews, Meetings, and Briefings

Stakeholder interviews are a formal process to track stakeholder concerns that will help craft the Collaboration and Communication Plan in the next section. Each National Forest, in consultation with the Regional Office team, will determine whether an **impartial third party** will conduct stakeholder interviews. The purpose of stakeholder interviews is to seek input on the structure of the planning process, including use of scientific information, and to deepen understanding of stakeholder interests and likelihood of success. Interviews will concentrate on opinion leaders and strive for a representative sample of stakeholder interest groups since interviewing all stakeholders would not be possible due to

time and resource limitations. Stakeholder interviews could take the form of **listening sessions** in which small groups meet together with the third party or with Forest Service staff to discuss issues and concerns. Listening sessions for the purpose of the stakeholder analysis would likely be with interests groups. The benefit of a third party conducting the stakeholder analysis is that stakeholders can speak confidentially and also tend to be more forthcoming, providing insights to analyze interests and concerns for shaping the Collaboration & Communication Plan.

In addition, Forest leadership, the planner, and public affairs office will **conduct meetings and briefings** with key stakeholders to inform them about and solicit input on the planning process. **Briefings provide an opportunity for two-way communication: to inform about and to solicit input on the planning process and issues.**

C. Forest Assess Capacity

- 1) Staffing**
- 2) Data, Information, and Technical Resources**
- 3) Budget**
- 4) Existing Public Engagement and Collaborative Activities**
- 5) Facilitation**

Develop Collaboration & Communication Plan

Based on the analysis of stakeholder interests and Forest capacity, the purpose of the Collaboration & Communication Plan is to provide an engagement strategy that supports developing a forest plan that is responsive to the interests of the forest, agencies, and the public and to inform and solicit input from the public and agencies on forest planning. The Collaboration and Communication Plan elements will:

- identify the major steps in the revision process where the Forest will seek greater or lesser engagement;
- clarify the schedule for meetings, outreach, and other communication;
- affirm purpose and principles, roles and responsibilities, and decision-making; and,
- identify key audiences/constituencies, potential partners, tools and materials, media outlets, outreach venues, and key messages for the Forest's revision process.

A. Key Considerations

- a. What are the most effective ways to manage communication with all individuals and groups interested in forest planning?
- b. How can difficult issues be addressed during the revision process? Will some take longer to resolve or require a separate process, such as travel management?
- c. What is the range of interests that need to be involved to ensure an inclusive revision process? How can these interests be represented during plan revision?
- d. If national organizations and local branches or chapters are interested in forest plan revision, how will coordination and consistency between national and local interests be facilitated?
- e. In addition to formal consultation, how will the Forest collaboratively engage local Native American Tribes?
- f. What opportunities exist for working together with Tribal and local governments?
- g. How will existing public engagement and collaborative efforts be used to advance specific steps in the revision process?
- h. What role will science and scientists play? How can joint fact finding contribute to the plan revision in a timely manner?
- i. How will collaborative workshops promote inclusion to ensure that Forest Service staff and stakeholders can fully explore and understand issues and concerns?
- j. How will disagreements be explored and addressed in the planning process?
- k. What are the best tools to communicate with a range of stakeholders, including local communities and users groups who travel to forests to visit or recreate?

B. Decision Making and Roles

1) Decision Maker

The Forest Supervisor is the final decision-maker on the Forest Plan. The supervisor is the responsible official for development and approval of plan revision for lands under the supervisor's responsibility (Proposed Planning Rule 36 CFR § 219.2 (3)).

2) Roles & Responsibilities

- Forest Service – National Forest

The Forest will provide leadership and strategic guidance on resource issues and decisions represented in the forest plan and support the public engagement and Tribal consultation process. The Forest will identify and allocate staff, equipment, and financial resources to develop the information, complete the planning tasks, and integrate public input in the draft and final revised plan.

- Forest Service – Regional Office

Region 5 will provide a framework for the revision process to ensure consistency and comparability across Forest plans. Region 5 will support planning efforts that require integration of information across multiple Forests. The Regional Office will provide review and guidance and perform the bioregional assessment. This includes a common structure and approach for assessing resources, in accord with the bioregional assessment and science synthesis, for public communication and engagement, and Tribal consultation. The intent is to make the revision process clear, consistent, and efficient for the Forests, Tribal and local governments, and stakeholders, many of whom may participate in multiple forests' plan revisions.

- Tribal Governments

Tribal Governments are sovereign nations with whom individual Forests consult on a government-to-government basis. Many Tribes have existing relationships and protocols for working with the Forests that encompass their historical or contemporary lands. National Forests will offer Tribes the opportunity to participate in and provide input to the plan revision process in accord with existing agreements.

- Cooperating Agencies

The Forest Supervisor will encourage, where appropriate, States, counties, and other local governments to seek cooperating agency status in the National Environmental Policy Act process (Proposed Planning Rule 36 CFR § 219.4 (1) (iv)).

- State Agencies

State agencies include State fish and wildlife agencies, State foresters, and other relevant State agencies. States can contribute and participate in the planning process, coordinating land management planning. In discussion with the Forest Supervisor, State agencies may seek cooperating agency status. The Forest Supervisor may participate in State Planning efforts and coordinate on land management planning.

- County Governments

County governments in California have authority for land use planning and constitute the local government counterpart to the Forests. During plan revision, County governments will be **engaged early in the process and** requested to participate in and provide input to the plan revision process. County governments can also become a cooperating agency under the National Environmental Policy Act process for plan revision. In coordinating with Counties, the Forest Supervisor must consider the objectives of the local governments as expressed in their plans and policies, assess the interrelated effects of these plans and policies, and determine how the forest plan should deal with the impacts identified. To facilitate this, the Counties will provide written interpretations of the applicable sections of County plans when the County thinks provisions of the proposed plan are inconsistent.

Some Counties may choose to sign on to the Memorandum of Agreement being developed among the US Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service Region 5 and the California State Association of Counties and Regional Council of Rural Counties representing California county governing bodies. This Memorandum would provide single points of contacts and communication guidelines for signees.

- Interested Individuals, non-Federally Recognized Tribes, and Entities

Interested individuals, non-federally recognized tribes, and entities may participate in the plan revision process early and often depending on interest. Some individuals, non-federally recognized tribes, and entities may be very active participating in all outreach and collaborative activities while others may choose to receive updates and notices. All individuals, non-federally recognized tribes, and entities are vital to developing the assessment, developing the proposed plan, including the monitoring program, commenting on the proposal, participating in the National Environmental Policy Act review process, and reviewing the results of monitoring information.

- Scientists

The Proposed Planning Rule commits to using the best available science to inform the planning process. Scientists serve as resource experts and advisors to the planning process.

C. Communication Strategies and Tools

The following strategies are relevant throughout the revision process. The Collaboration and Communication Plan will provide a detailed description of how the forest will use these tools.

- 1) Use the Collaboration & Communication Plan to clarify decision-making, roles and responsibilities, schedule, etc.
- 2) Use the Forest Service **wiki website as a clearinghouse** for all the information and materials associated with the Forest's plan revision process.
- 3) Develop and maintain an interested parties' **email distribution list**.

- 4) Proactively develop and regularly utilize **relationships** with existing organizations, the press, media outlets, and select bloggers to share news and information.
- 5) **Develop general informational materials** describing the Forest's revision process and highlighting opportunities for public engagement, including a general brochure, milestone fact sheets, newsletter articles (for placement in others' newsletters), and briefing packets.
- 6) **Meet with elected officials**, including the local county boards of supervisors, local representatives for the state legislature, and local representatives for Congress at the start of the revision process and subsequent milestones (e.g., end of Year 1).
- 7) **Conduct outreach briefings at local organizations and collaborative groups**—go where people are already meeting. Forest Service staff can request time on the agenda of existing organizations to conduct briefings on the planning process and provide information and solicit feedback at key milestones.
- 8) **Hold periodic collaborative planning workshops** and public meetings to inform the public about the planning process and solicit input on the forest assessment and forest plan revision. Consider the use of **technology** in these forums, such as video teleconferencing and online meeting tools to facilitate participation for non-local stakeholders and others with an interest in contributing from a remote location.
- 9) **Develop a media kit and strategy** to maximize a broader communication strategy and proactively communicate status updates and progress.

Recommended Collaboration & Public Engagement

This section defines collaboration and provides recommended engagement for plan revision.

A. Defining Collaboration

Collaboration: A structured manner in which a collection of people with diverse interests share knowledge, ideas and resources while working together in an inclusive and cooperative manner toward a common purpose. Collaboration, in the context of land management planning in the Pacific Southwest Region, is to engage diverse interested parties in developing understanding and widely supported options to issues of concern. The goal of collaboration is to develop a forest plans that are responsive to the interests of the forests, agencies, and the public.

Participation: Activities that include a wide range of public involvement tools and processes such as collaboration, public meetings, open houses, workshops, and comment periods (36 CFR 19).

The Proposed Planning Rule provides opportunity for participation in the assessment, plan revision, and monitoring. (36 CFR § 219.4 (a)) All Collaborative Planning Workshops will be consistent with FACA guidelines. (See Section 4 Legal Frameworks / Sideboards.) Collaborative Planning Workshops will create opportunities for dialogue to explore different perspectives and find common ground.

[Link to International Association of Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation](#)

1) Collaboration and Decision Making

- Collaborative processes are more akin to problem solving than decision making.
- Effective collaboration incorporates the following key ingredients:
 - **Deliberations are thoughtful and frank and take local and non-local interests into account and include a diversity of perspectives and interests**
 - Meetings are civil and open to diverse viewpoints
 - Opportunities for participation for all interested parties
 - Participants are involved in determining key components of the process
 - Incorporating high quality information as determined at least in part by the participants
- Collaboration does not take away the authority of an agency to make decisions. While individuals can challenge the decision of agencies, individuals cannot challenge authority of the agencies to make those decisions.

2) Benefits

- **Improved Outcomes:** Collaboration frequently results in innovative projects and policies that extend across traditional jurisdictions, are responsive to different interests, and manage complexity.
- **New Perspectives:** Conventional decision-making can bring about change through new rules and policies, but only collaboration can truly shift people's underlying attitudes.
- **Mutual Learning:** Collaboration allows participants to learn from one another and work toward a deeper understanding of important issues and constraints.

- **New Networks:** Collaboration builds “social capital” by increasing trust, often leading to the creation of new partnerships for sharing information and undertaking collective projects.
- **A Sense of Shared Ownership:** Problem-solving power is shared in a collaborative process, and this often translates into a sense of shared responsibility for the outcomes.
- **Reduced Conflict:** Shared understanding and an increase in trust among participants can result in less conflict and fewer problems in the future.

B. Timeline: “Prep Year”

Goal: Analyze stakeholder interests and forest capacity for collaboration; conduct meetings and briefings; develop Collaboration & Communication Plan.

- a. Conduct round of meetings with local electeds and any key organizations that serve as an outreach vehicle.
- b. Consider the need for an impartial third party.
- c. Conduct a stakeholder analysis and forest internal capacity assessment.
- d. Develop draft Collaboration and Communication Plan to guide public outreach during the Assessment and Forest Plan Revision.
- e. Consider conducting workshops on Collaboration and Communication Plan to explain interview findings and solicit feedback on draft findings. (Workshop can also wait until Assessment process formally begins.)

C. Timeline: Year One Recommended Engagement

Goal: Complete bioregional and forest assessment; initiate public participation process; refine Collaboration & Communication Plan.

1) Bioregional & Forest Assessments

- f. Develop a timeline that identifies when draft assessment information will be available, when input and feedback will be obtained, and when information revisions will be complete.
- g. Identify which assessment topics involve primarily technical and/or visual materials for public review and comment (e.g., maps), and which topics are primarily conceptual or strategic and will require discussion with the public, stakeholders, and Tribes.
- h. Conduct round of meetings with local electeds and any key organizations that serve as an outreach vehicle.
- i. Hold public workshop(s) to solicit comments on different bundles of assessment topics, with corresponding participation strategies.
 - i. For example, a series of “stations” (i.e., tables or booths with materials displayed on easels/the wall, and an appropriate staff person) would allow people to easily look at, ask questions about, and comment on a range of visual materials.

- ii. For example, a series of facilitated discussion sessions would allow people to talk in a semi-structured way about conceptual/strategic topics.
- j. Identify which topics overlap clearly with the work of existing collaborative groups, and work with the collaborative's leadership to identify the best way to solicit feedback from members.
- k. Consider utilizing the wiki site to solicit comments on specific technical/visual materials, and soliciting open-ended comments on discussion topics.
- l. Initiate Tribal consultation as needed.
- m. Use the overarching communication strategies and tools as laid out in the Communication Plan. (See Page 15, [Collaboration and Communication Plan](#).)

D. Timeline: Year Two Recommended Engagement

Goal: Engage the public in collaborative planning workshops, briefings, and scoping meeting; continue tribal consultation; provide regular communication and updates on planning process.

Collaborative Planning Workshops: Each forest will develop its workshop schedule and determine the number of workshops based on forest resources, existing collaborative efforts, and stakeholder input. The exact sequencing and schedule will follow each forest's Collaboration & Communication Plan and work in concert with the NEPA process.

	YEAR 2	
Time	NEPA Process	Collaborative Opportunities through Workshops, Meetings & Briefings
	<i>Notice of Intent</i> Initiate Plan Revision with a <i>Proposed Plan (Need for Change)</i>	Provide planning process overview Review stakeholder analysis Discuss <i>proposed plan (need for change)</i> and management emphasis on ecological restoration and sustainable resource uses Develop Forest vision and the role of the Forest in communities
	Desired Conditions	What are the desired conditions (ecological, social, and economic) needed for the plan? What strategies will cause changes on the ground (i.e., manipulate vegetation)?
	Alternative Development	Develop traditional alternatives or examine strategic scenarios within the framework of a proposed plan Develop plan components: Management Areas, Standards & Guidelines, Objectives, Special Areas and Suitability Key Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are special area designations? ▪ What management areas/zones/geographic areas are needed? ▪ What objectives are needed to achieve desired conditions? ▪ What uses are suitable within various zones?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What standards and guidelines are needed?
	Environmental Analysis	<p>How does the Forest guide information and display it?</p> <p>What analytical processes does the Forest use to get at specific concerns within the scope of the analysis?</p> <p>With limited time and money, how can the Forest be most effective?</p> <p>What monitoring questions are needed?</p>
	<p>Draft Environmental Impact Statement</p> <p>With formal 90-day review and comment period</p> <p>This required NEPA step will provide the basis for additional collaboration in year 3.</p>	

E. Timeline: Year Three Engagement

YEAR 3		
time	NEPA Process	Collaborative Opportunities through Workshops and Briefings
	Develop Final EIS	<p>Based on formal comments, how does the Forest adjust the document to reflect suggested changes?</p> <p>Has additional science become available? Have new issues emerged?</p> <p>Have different strategies come to light? How do plan components need to be refined?</p>
	Analysis	Re-analyze based on changes made. Do we need to adjust the guides? Are the metrics and strategies still appropriate? What adjustments to the monitoring plan are needed?
	Draft Decision	
	Objection Process	Stakeholders discuss plan content—what’s in the plan and why
	Final Decision	
	<p>Carry Out the Strategies & Objectives in the Plan, with Adjustments based on Monitoring</p> <p>Collaboration Continues as Projects Move Forward</p>	

Existing Collaboration & Communication Plans

Each National Forest engaged in Forest Plan Revision will develop its Collaboration and Communication Plan. Also, Region 5 is developing a Tribal Collaboration and Communication Plan. These Plans will be ready in late 2012 and early 2013 and can be accessed at the web sites.

Inyo National Forest

[Link to the Inyo National Forest Collaboration and Communication Plan to be inserted here]

Sequoia National Forest

[Link to the Sequoia National Forest Collaboration and Communication Plan to be inserted here]

Sierra National Forest

[Link to the Sierra National Forest Collaboration and Communication Plan to be inserted here]

Region 5 Tribal Collaboration and Communication Plan

[Link to the Region 5 Tribal Collaboration and Communication Plan to be inserted here]

Region 5 Tribal Consultation Plan

[Link to the Region 5 Tribal Consultation Plan to be inserted here]

Forest Service Wiki as Information Clearinghouse

A. **Our Forest Place:** <http://ourforestplace.ning.com/>

Assessment Toolkit: The [Living Assessment](#) is a wiki-based Assessment that allows individuals to help write content for the California forest assessment. Individuals can also upload sources for a particular topic, and share in discussion about content or sources. The [Value Mapping](#) page outlines some new tools in development that help capture public values across the landscape.

Discussions: Individuals can view, contribute, and start discussions on the [discussion page](#).

Blogs: Blogs are another opportunity to contribute ideas and content, and learn about what others think. Blogger must follow the [Code of Conduct](#). Before blogging, visit OurForestPlace's [How to Blog](#) page for tips and guidelines.

Groups: [Groups](#) provide an online meeting room to focus on a specific topic, collaborate on a document, share discussions, or work as a team. It's easy to [browse existing groups](#) and to [join a group](#). Groups can be public -- open to anyone to join -- or private, where membership is "by invitation only

My Page: After exploring, individuals can introduce his or herself on an individual "[My Page](#)," where the person can provide information, post photos, and communicate with others.

Help: If you have any questions about OurForestPlace check out our [FAQs](#), post your question on the [Helpdesk](#), or [email an Administrator](#).

Best Practices in Public Engagement and Collaboration

1. Accurately document and make publicly available meeting discussions and input.
2. Respond in timely way to information queries and questions.
3. Maintain transparency in information gathering, analysis, and decision-making.
4. Initiate a communication process early on, and maintain communication even during low activity periods.
5. Demonstrate clear executive commitment, guidance, and accountability.
6. Establish an inclusive revision process and multiple options for engagement.
7. Establish a process that provides regional consistency as well as the ability to tailor steps to local capacity and networks.
8. Develop a data management system with the end uses and end users in mind.
9. Establish clear processes for need and action prioritization before beginning these steps.